

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 LAB-06

SIL-01 DRC-01 CG-00 FMC-04 /073 W

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R 252105Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3725

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ETRN, AR

SUBJECT: MARITIME UNIONS POSITION ON LASH OPERATIONS

REF BA 6992

SUMMARY. MARITIME UNIONS OPPOSE LASH OPERATIONS ON GROUNDS THEY REPRESENT UNFAIR COMPETITION AND INFRINGE ON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. MARITIME WORKERS FEDERATION SECGEN TOLD LABATT THAT NO FURTHER LASH OPERATIONS, INCLUDING SCHEDULED OCT 5 LASH VISIT, WILL BE PERMITTED UNTIL CONGRESS EXPRESSES SENSE OF NATION ON ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. REFTEL CHRONICLED CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING SEP 20 LASH VISIT TO BA, GAVE GOA AND DELTA LINES VIEWPOINT ON DISPUTE, AND SUGGESTED "FUTURE LASH OPERATIONS REMAIN CLOUDY" IN VIEW UNION OPPOSITION TO SUCH OPERATIONS. IN SEP 24 DISCUSSION ARGENTINE MARITIME WORKERS FEDERATION (FARMAR) SECGEN MASSAGATTI GAVE LABATT MARITIME UNIONS POSITION ON LASH OPERATIONS, AS FOLLOWS.

2. BASIC OPPOSITION TO LASH OPERATION FOUNDED ON UNIONS BELIEF THAT NEW SYSTEM REPRESENTS UNFAIR COMPETITION TO ARGENTINE MARITIME INTERESTS, INFRINGES ON ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY OVER NATIONAL WATERWAYS, AND ADVERSELY AFFECTS THE NATIONAL WELFARE. MASSAGATTI STATED THAT GOA ACCEPTANCE OF LASH OPERATIONS WAS TAKEN

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BY A MILITARY GOVT, WHICH DID NOT REPRESENT THE POPULAR FORCES,

WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH AFFECTED UNIONS; THEREFORE, THE HUMAN ELEMENT, I.E. JOBS, WAS NOT CONSIDERED. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT OTHER THAN TUG BOAT MECHANICS, FEW JOBS WERE AFFECTED. HE ADDED THAT NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS WERE NOT ADEQUATELY PROTECTED EITHER, AS THE BENEFITS, I.E. LOWER COSTS, FROM THE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY ACCRUED NOT TO THE NATIONAL WELFARE BUT RATHER TO THE FOREIGN COMPANIES INVOLVED. HE POINTED OUT THAT ARGENTINA COULD NOT COMPETE WITH THE NEW SYSTEM BECAUSE OF THE "PROHIBITIVE COST" OF A MOTHER SHIP AND ITS LAUNCHES.

3. MASSAGATTI STATED THAT THE SEP 19 COMPROMISE REACHED WITH THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS, WHICH PERMITTED THE SEP 20 UNLOADING OF THE LASH VESSEL, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDED A COMMITMENT THAT NO FUTURE OPERATIONS WOULD BE AUTHORIZED UNTIL CONGRESS ISSUED A RESOLUTION OR LAW EXPRESSING THE NATIONAL CONSENSUS ON THE ISSUE. SHOULD CONGRESS APPROVE SUCH OPERATIONS, MASSAGATTI SAID, THE LABOR UNIONS WOULD ACCEPT THE DETERMINATION AND OFFER NO FURTHER RESISTANCE. BUT, HE EMPHASIZED, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE "SENSE OF THE NATION" IS EXPRESSED ON THE MATTER, THE MARITIME UNIONS WILL NOT PERMIT ANY FUTURE LASH OPERATIONS. HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT THE LASH VESSEL DUE TO ARRIVE IN BUENOS AIRES OCT 5 WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO DISCHARGE ITS CARGO.

COMMENT. WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT MASSAGATTI'S OR THE UNIONS POSITION WILL BE CHANGED TO PERMIT THE OCT 5 SCHEDULED LASH DISCHARGE OF CARGO. THEREFORE, UNLESS DELTA LINES CAN MOBILIZE ITS FORCES TO SEEK EARLY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT ADDITIONAL LASH SERVICE WILL BE PERMITTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** collinp0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION EB  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** BA 6992  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** collinp0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 JAN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2002 by collinp0>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MARITIME UNIONS POSITION ON LASH OPERATIONS  
**TAGS:** ELAB, ETRN, AR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005